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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-TAIWAN RELATIONS

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage October 5 on Typhoon Krosa, which is expected to hit Taiwan over the weekend; on the Double Ten Day celebrations; on Taiwan's UN referendum; and on Chen Chi-li, a former criminal gang leader in Taiwan known for his alleged involvement in the murder of Taiwan writer Henry Liu in San Francisco in 1984, who died of cancer Thursday in Hong Kong. The pro-independence "Liberty Times" ran a banner headline on page two that said "[Former Taiwan Foreign Minister] Fredrick Chien Confirms the Six Assurances; the United States Does Not Support China's Claim of Sovereignty over Taiwan."

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a "Liberty Times" editorial echoed Fredrick Chien's remarks on Taiwan's sovereignty and said "it is the pillar of the United States' 'one China policy' 'not to support the PRC's claim of sovereignty over Taiwan' and not to allow Beijing to alter the status of Taiwan's independent sovereignty." An op-ed in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times," written by Missouri State University's International Affairs graduate program director Dennis Hickey, urged the Bush administration to endorse a resolution that enables Taiwan to participate in the UN as an observer using the name "Chinese Taipei." End summary.

¶3. U.S.-Taiwan Relations

A) "The United States Has Never Supported the People's Republic of China's Sovereignty Claim over Taiwan"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 720,000] editorialized (10/5):

"The 'Heritage Foundation,' a Washington D.C.-based think tank, held a seminar recently on 'President Reagan's Six Assurances to Taiwan and Their Meaning Today,' in which all the persons involved sought to go back to history and clarify six 'assurances' that President Ronald Reagan had made to President Chiang Ching-kuo. ... The U.S. government has constantly reiterated that its 'one China policy' is based on the three communiques signed between China and the United States and the 'Taiwan Relations Act.' (TRA) The seminar on 'President Reagan's Six Assurances to Taiwan and Their Meaning Today' this time provided a valuable opportunity [for people] to get a better understanding of the United States' 'one China policy.' Through the discussion of the origin and course of development of the 'Six Assurances,' people can tell more distinctly that the United States' 'one China policy' does not support the People's Republic of China's (PRC) claim of sovereignty over Taiwan.

"Whenever the Beijing authorities talk about the 'one China principle,' they never mention the TRA or the 'Six Assurances.' That is because both the TRA and the 'Six Assurances' partially contradict Beijing's 'one China principle.' Based on the TRA and the 'Six Assurances,' the United States has made it very clear that

Taiwan, the safety of the Taiwan people and Taiwan's future are by no means internal affairs of the PRC. ... [J]udging from the TRA and the 'Six Assurances,' one can see very clearly that it is in Taiwan's and the United States' common interests to maintain regional security in the Western Pacific. It is also the pillar of the United States' 'one China policy' 'not to support the PRC's claim of sovereignty over Taiwan' and not to allow Beijing to alter the status of Taiwan's independent sovereignty. The common ground of such core values has far exceeded the differences between Taiwan and the United States caused by [Taiwan's] UN referendum, and Taipei and Washington's 'recollection of the Six Assurances' at this moment has pointed out this situation just in time."

B) "US Should Seek Compromise at UN"

Dennis Hickey, director of the graduate program in International Affairs at Missouri State University, opined in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (10/5):

"... Washington should not support Taiwan's full membership in the UN or jettison its 'one China' policy. This would jeopardize the US' important relationship with China. Moreover, Taiwan's UN campaign does hold the potential to increase tensions in the Taiwan Strait. Beijing has already threatened Taiwan and calls its vice president as 'the scum of the nation.' And Taiwan's new drive to join the UN is doomed to failure. China will undoubtedly block the move. But there is something the US can do. In order to defuse the UN controversy and help prevent it from escalating into a regional or global crisis, the US administration ought to abide by an important part of official policy that it now ignores. According to the 1994 interagency review of US policy toward Taiwan, the US will 'support opportunities for Taiwan's voice to be heard in organizations where it is denied membership.' But Taipei still has no voice in the UN.

"Rather than bully Taipei, Washington ought to follow the advice it so often proffers to Beijing and try out some new thinking. Employing quiet diplomacy, the US should gently nudge other countries -- including China -- toward the idea that Taiwan deserves a voice in the UN and should be allowed to participate -- if only as an 'observer' or 'non-state actor.' When the 63rd session of the UN General Assembly opens next September and Taipei's diplomatic allies once again ask it to consider Taiwan's full membership, Washington should be prepared to support a compromise proposal that is consistent with longstanding US policy and does not violate the sacrosanct 'one China policy.'

"The Bush administration should endorse a resolution that enables Taiwan to participate in the UN as an observer using a name similar to the one it now employs when participating in the Olympic Games -- Chinese Taipei. After all, it is clear that the time has arrived for the international community to find a way for Taiwan's voice to be heard in the UN."

YOUNG